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To: U.S. Department of Transportation  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Office of Defects Investigation  
NSA-10.01, 400 7th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20590

From:

Apex, NC  
VIN: JTHED192540

In a recent winter storm, my 2004 Lexus IS300 SportCross exhibited essentially no rear wheel traction which led to frequent spinouts and a subsequent collision with another vehicle. During this 30 minute drive, we experienced 4 spin outs while driving far slower than any other cars on the road, needed to be pushed up 3 low-grades hills, and could not depart from a parking lot because of the lack of available traction in the rear wheels. Even using the snow feature traction and 3<sup>rd</sup> gear, we had essentially no control of the vehicle while driving at speeds less than 25 mph. I am experienced driver with no prior accidents in the last 10 years and have never experienced such a lack of control driving an automobile in any environment.

Consumer Reports has reported this automobile as having little rear-wheel traction on ice yet the car was fitted with Bridgestone Potenza REO40 tires which also have been identified as performing poorly on ice. The combination of this rear-wheel drive car with summer only performance tires was a recipe for disaster during a minor winter storm. It should be the responsibility of the manufacturer to warn of extreme danger during winter conditions and offer appropriate accessories and advice for customers PRIOR to exposing them to life-threatening driving conditions. Lexus should have shown better judgment when pairing the tires with this car and consumers should be notified.

Few Lexus IS300 SportCross automobiles have been sold in the U.S. and perhaps because of these low numbers, the danger of this vehicle has not been adequately ascertained. I would request that the NHTSA investigate the incidence rate of accidents occurring in winter driving from these vehicles and issue subsequent warnings to current and future purchasers. Currently, the IS300 is not listed in the NHTSA Office of Defects Investigation homepage which severely curtails data collection and analysis for IS300 owners and potential purchasers. This car should not be allowed on roads during winter conditions with these tires as the threat to drivers, passengers, property and other vehicles on the road is simply too great.

Please feel free to contact me for further information. Thank you.

Cc: Johnson Lexus of Raleigh, NC  
Lexus Customer Satisfaction Department  
Bridgestone-Firestone Tires  
Consumer Reports  
Insurance Institute for Highway Safety  
Center for Highway Safety

Jessica  
1/24/05